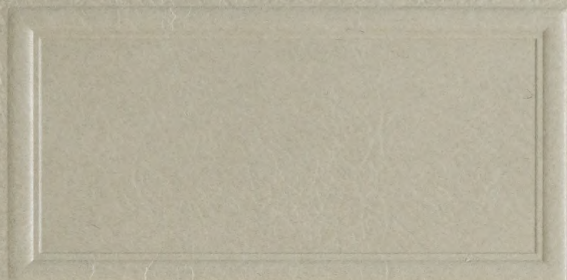


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A STATEMENT

TO

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON BILINGUALISM AND BICULTURALISM

BY

THE CANADIAN NURSES' ASSOCIATION, L'ASSOCIATION DES INFIRMIERES CANADIENNES

The Canadian Nurses' Association, L'Association des Infirmières Canadiennes, wishes to express its appreciation to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism for this opportunity to present a statement portraying the unique nature of its organization and its views on cultural relationships.

CANADIAN NURSES' ASSOCIATION
74 STANLEY AVENUE,
OTTAWA 2, CANADA.

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71 STANLEY AVENUE
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A STATEMENT TO
THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON BILINGUALISM AND BICULTURALISM

The Canadian Nurses' Association with a membership of 77,618 is a federation of the ten provincial registered nurses' associations. It was formed in 1908 as an affiliation of existing nursing organizations in Canada and was incorporated in 1947. The Association's original purpose was to provide a link with the International Council of Nurses, an organization with which Canadian nurses have been associated since 1899.

Through the evolution of time and experience, the primary function of the Canadian Nurses' Association has come to be a fostering of high standards of nursing practice in Canada to the end that the highest possible level of health may be achieved by the people. The promotion of maximum health is the basis of the profession's concept of nursing care.

Membership in the Canadian Nurses' Association is obtained through membership in one of the provincial nurses' associations, each of which is authorized by provincial legislation to grant registration.

A registered nurse is represented in local and provincial matters by her provincial association; in national and international affairs by the Canadian Nurses' Association.

The headquarters of the Canadian Nurses' Association is at 74 Stanley Avenue, Ottawa 2, Canada.

The Canadian Nurses' Association is a bilingual organization, in name and in operation. Its official journal The Canadian Nurse as well as other pamphlets and informational materials are published in English and in French. For many years, simultaneous translation services have been used in its general meetings for the benefit of its large membership of English and French nurses.

Historically, since 1639, when three French Augustinian nuns founded the first Canadian hospital, Hôtel Dieu de Québec, differences of language, culture, religion or race have not deterred those who have ministered to the health and sickness needs of Canadians. Since its earliest beginnings in this country nursing has been a multi-cultural activity.

Members of the Canadian Nurses' Association come from many races, religions and cultural inheritances. They enjoy freedom of movement in employment from province to province and from country to country. Similarly, qualified nurses from other countries assimilate easily into the nursing force of hospitals and health agencies in this country, assuming increasing responsibilities as their fluency in the language improves.

Outside the province of Quebec, English is the working language of most hospitals and health agencies in Canada. Many of these are bilingual and serve mixed populations. Hospitals serve all ethnic groups in their respective communities.

The headquarters of the Canadian Nurses' Association is at
74 St. George Avenue, Toronto 5, Canada.

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serve all ethnic groups in their respective communities.

Nursing in Canada is the better for the heterogeneity of cultures within its ranks. Differences of language, race and colour are submerged by the commonalty of purpose and of organization.

A profession is always concerned with the improvement of the services given by its members. The Canadian Nurses' Association recognizes the necessity for nurses of the future, and indeed for all Canadians, to have a wider cultural preparation for life than most have possessed in the past. While many improvements in nursing service and nursing education are desired it would be difficult to relate them to linguistic factors. But certainly the quality of both nursing education and service would be enriched by changed attitudes of society toward

1. Broad patterns of general education in a cultural climate fostered by both French and English segments of our society which engenders respect, mutual understanding and peaceful relationships.

2. New patterns of administration and support for nursing education.

It has been said that a situation in which two groups work autonomously and independently in the same general area has within it the seeds of confusion and controversy. Happily, the inter-related interests of French and English nursing services, where they exist side by side, are such that consultation limits confusion and consideration replaces controversy.

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The Canadian Nurses' Association has adopted the Code of Ethics of the International Council of Nurses which states,

Service to mankind is the primary function of nurses and the reason for the existence of the nursing profession. Need for nursing service is universal. Professional nursing service is therefore unrestricted by considerations of nationality, race, creed, colour, politics or social status.

Inherent in the code is the fundamental concept that the nurse believes in the essential freedoms of mankind and in the preservation of human life.

The profound influence of this ethic on nursing and nurses in Canada throughout the years has been demonstrated by the participation of nurses, both French and English, in

- mission work in the Canadian north and far away lands
- disaster areas served by The Canadian Red Cross Society
- services and projects of The World Health Organization, Colombo Plan, Canadian University Service Overseas, etc.

When called upon, Canadian nurses have served in theatres of war, at home and abroad.

To some degree, unilingualism may have been a limiting factor in these nursing activities but it has never been a deterrent. Bilingualism or multilingualism is, and will always be, a talisman to ever-widening opportunities for national and international service.

By virtue of the methods used and adaptations made by the Canadian Nurses' Association, the needs and interests of both French and English members have been met harmoniously and with mutual benefit to all.

Canadian nursing services throughout the centuries has been devoted to the care of men of all cultures and testifies that the needs of people can be met without consideration of nationality, race, creed or colour, when knowledge and skill are applied in the spirit of deep humanistic concern.

Believing in the universal freedoms, the Canadian Nurses' Association holds the view that Canadians should have freedom of choice in their basic education and preparation for life to the greatest degree possible without threat or danger to a united Canada. Grateful that the all-pervading purpose of nursing has not been divided by cultural differences, the Canadian Nurses' Association is concerned and cherishes the hope that all Canadians will have the opportunity to acquire and to possess a rich multi-cultural endowment of skill and understanding.

Mrs. A. Isobel MacLeod, R.N., M.A.
President,
Canadian Nurses' Association

Helen K. Mussallem, R.N., M.A., Ed.D.
Executive Director,
Canadian Nurses' Association

June 24, 1964

Canadian nursing services throughout the country have been devoted to the care of all citizens and to the promotion of the health of the people. The needs of people can be met only by the development of a nursing service which is broad in scope, flexible in its methods, and responsive to the changing needs of the community. The Canadian Nurses' Association holds the view that Canadian nursing should have freedom of action in their field of activity and responsibility for life to the greatest degree possible within their power. It is the hope of the Canadian Nurses' Association that the purpose of nursing has not been divided by national differences and that all Canadians will have the opportunity to acquire and to possess a rich cultural and technical skill and understanding.

Walter E. Macdonald, R.N., M.A., President, Canadian Nurses' Association
 Mrs. A. Isabel Macdonald, R.N., M.A., President, Canadian Nurses' Association

June 14, 1950



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